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## **HUMANA DISTAFF WINNER MIA MISCHIEF PREVAILS IN ROXELANA, COVFEFE THIRD; ASMUSSEN ONLY THIRD TRAINER TO WIN 700 RACES AT CHURCHILL DOWNS**

**LOUISVILLE, Ky. (Saturday, June 22, 2019)** – **Mia Mischief**, winner of the \$500,000 Humana Distaff (Grade I) on Kentucky Derby Day, ran shoulder-to-shoulder with swift pace-setter **Covfefe** and put away the 2-5 favorite inside the final 50 yards to win Saturday's 10<sup>th</sup> running of the \$120,100 Roxelana Overnight Stakes at Churchill Downs by three-quarters of a length.

Late-closing **Awestruck** narrowly picked up second by a head over a tiring Covfefe, the lone 3-year-old in the field of five sprinting fillies and mares.

Mia Mischief, owned by **Bill and Corinne Heiligbrodt, Heider Family Stables (Scott Heider) and Madaket Stables (Sol Kumin and Jason Monteleone)**, ran six furlongs over a fast track in 1:09.76 under jockey **Ricardo Santana Jr.**

The Roxelana capped a big day for Hall of Fame conditioner **Steve Asmussen**, who became only the third trainer to win 700 races at historic Churchill Downs one race earlier when 5-year-old gelding **Rocky Tough** rallied to win the ninth race.

"We've been blessed with many great horses to get us there," Asmussen said.

Consider the swift 4-year-old filly Mia Mischief among Asmussen's lengthy roster of great ones.

Covfefe, who set a blistering six-furlong track record at Pimlico (1:07.70) while easily winning the \$150,000 Miss Preakness five weeks ago, hesitated slightly when the starting gate opened from post position No. 2 but she quickly took over to set a pressured pace of :21.38 for the first quarter mile with **Classy Act** and Mia Mischief a half-length back to her outside.

Classy Act gave way around the turn and the two favorites matched strides as they crossed the half-mile pole in a fast :44.41 and five-eighths in :56.48. In a long and thrilling stretch drive, the elder Mia Mischief put her nose in front within the final furlong and wore down Covfefe as Awestruck rallied late to pick up the place position.

"(Mia Mischief) is such a nice filly and we beat a very nice filly in Covfefe today," Santana said. "Going around the turn, (Covfefe) kicked clear a little bit and got me a little worried. Mia is such class and just kept digging in for more."

The triumph was worth \$74,120 and boosted Mia Mischief's bankroll to \$957,540 with a record of 15-7-6-0. In her previous start, she scored an 11-1 upset in the seven-furlong Humana Distaff when she defeated favorite **Marley's Freedom** by 1 ¾ lengths. Her 3-year-old campaign included a victory in the Eight Belles (GII) at Churchill Downs and a narrow runner-up effort in the Test (GI) at Saratoga.

"It was very special to get this filly back to the winner's circle and get ready for bigger races down the road," Asmussen said.

Mia Mischief returned \$5.60, \$3.20 and \$2.10 as the 7-2 third betting choice. Awestruck, sent to post at odds of 16-1 under **Julien Leparoux**, returned \$6.40 and \$3.80. Covfefe, under **Shaun Bridgmohan**, paid \$2.10 to show. **Honey Bunny** was another half-length back of the third-place finisher and was 13 lengths clear of Classy Act, who trailed the field.

"We went really fast and she got pressure the entire race," Bridgmohan said of Covfefe. "We just got beat today."

The field was reduced to five starters after **Annathela**, **Ascot Day**, **Astrollinthepark**, **Salt Bae** and **Upset Brewing** were scratched.

Mia Mischief is a daughter of Into Mischief out of the Speightstown mare Greer Lynn and was bred in Kentucky by **Spendthrift Farm LLC**.

Asmussen, who was inducted into the National Museum of Racing Hall of Fame in 2016, joined **Dale Romans** (728) and **Bill Mott** (715) in a very select group to reach the 700-win milestone at Churchill Downs.

The 53-year-old trainer collected his first Churchill Downs win on May 16, 1993 when **Snake Eyes** won a \$41,420 allowance at 1 1/16 miles on turf by 1 ¼ lengths under Hall of Fame jockey **Pat Day**.

Asmussen has won a record 20 Churchill Downs training titles and is poised to collect No. 21. Rocky Tough and Mia Mischief were his 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> wins at the 38-day Spring Meet, which gave him a 10-win advantage over **Eddie Kenneally**. Closing day is next Saturday.

Overall, Asmussen has won more than 8,400 races, which is second behind the horse racing's all-time leader **Dale Baird**, who collected 9,445 wins.

Saturday's Roxelana annually honors the crack female sprinter who won seven of 11 starts and \$264,726 between 2000-03 for owner/breeder **William Landes III** and trainer **William "Blackie" Huffman**.

Racing at Churchill Downs continues Sunday with a 10-race program that begins at 12:45 p.m. (all times Eastern). There is a \$285,126 carryover in Sunday's 20-cent Single 6 Jackpot which begins in Race 5 at 2:45 p.m. and a \$3,955 Super Hi-5 carryover for the 5:26 p.m. finale. Sunday doubles as Family Adventure Day presented by Kroger.

#### ROXELANA QUOTES

**Ricardo Santana Jr., jockey of MIA MISCHIEF (winner):** "(Mia Mischief) is such a nice filly and we beat a very nice filly in Covfefe today. Going around the turn, (Covfefe) kicked clear a little bit and got me a little worried. Mia is such class and just kept digging in for more."

**Steve Asmussen, trainer of MIA MISCHIEF (winner):** "It was very special to get this filly back to the winner's circle and get ready for bigger races down the road."

**On winning 700 races at Churchill Downs:** "It's been incredible to have this opportunity to become only the third trainer in Churchill Downs history to have 700 wins. We've been blessed with many great horses to get us there. It's amazing to be closing in on such a milestone as the all-time leading trainer at Churchill Downs."

**Julien Leparoux, jockey of AWESTRUCK (runner-up):** "We ran a great race. We let the horses do their thing on the lead and were able to close ground late to run a really solid second."

**Shaun Bridgmohan, jockey of COVFEEFE (third):** "We went really fast and she got pressure the entire race. We just got beat today."

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